



## Spokane Holistic Healing Client Handout

### Herbal Interventions for Menopause Symptom Relief

There are several herbal remedies that have been traditionally used to help alleviate menopausal symptoms. While scientific evidence on the effectiveness of these herbs can vary, many women report relief from common symptoms such as hot flashes, night sweats, mood swings, and sleep disturbances. Here are some commonly used herbal remedies for menopause:

#### 1. Black Cohosh

- **Uses:** Black cohosh is one of the most popular herbs used to relieve hot flashes, night sweats, mood swings, and other menopausal symptoms.
- **How it works:** It's thought to work by acting on the serotonin receptors in the brain, which can help regulate mood and temperature control. Some studies suggest it can reduce the frequency and severity of hot flashes.
- **Precautions:** Black cohosh should be used with caution, especially for women with liver conditions, as it has been associated with rare liver toxicity in some cases.

#### 2. Red Clover

- **Uses:** Red clover is often used to treat hot flashes, night sweats, and other symptoms related to menopause.
- **How it works:** Red clover contains isoflavones, which are plant-based compounds that mimic estrogen in the body. This may help balance hormone levels during menopause.
- **Precautions:** Red clover may interfere with hormone-sensitive conditions, so it's important to speak with a healthcare provider if you have a history of breast cancer, endometriosis, or other hormone-related conditions.

#### 3. Dong Quai

- **Uses:** Dong Quai, often called "female ginseng," is a traditional Chinese herb used for hormonal balance and managing symptoms like hot flashes, irritability, and mood swings.
- **How it works:** Dong Quai is believed to have phytoestrogenic effects, which can help balance estrogen levels. It also may improve blood circulation and reduce discomfort.
- **Precautions:** It should not be used by women with hormone-sensitive conditions, and it may interact with blood-thinning medications, so it's important to consult with a healthcare provider before using it.



#### 4. Evening Primrose Oil

- **Uses:** Evening primrose oil is often used to reduce hot flashes, mood swings, irritability, and sleep disturbances during menopause.
- **How it works:** It contains gamma-linolenic acid (GLA), an omega-6 fatty acid, which may help support hormonal balance and reduce inflammation.
- **Precautions:** Evening primrose oil can cause mild digestive upset in some individuals, and it may interact with certain medications (such as blood thinners).

#### 5. Chaste Tree (Vitex)

- **Uses:** Chaste tree is commonly used to relieve symptoms of hormonal imbalance, such as mood swings, irritability, and breast tenderness.
- **How it works:** It works by stimulating the pituitary gland, which regulates hormones like estrogen and progesterone. It's thought to help balance the ratio of these hormones during menopause.
- **Precautions:** Chaste tree may interact with certain medications, including hormone treatments, so it's important to consult with a healthcare provider before using it.

#### 6. Ginseng

- **Uses:** Ginseng is used to boost energy, combat fatigue, and reduce stress. It may also help with mood swings and mental clarity.
- **How it works:** Ginseng has adaptogenic properties, meaning it helps the body manage stress and hormonal fluctuations. It can also have a calming effect, potentially easing menopausal anxiety and insomnia.
- **Precautions:** Ginseng may cause insomnia or overstimulation in some people, so it's best taken earlier in the day.

#### 7. Sage

- **Uses:** Sage is often used for its potential to reduce hot flashes, night sweats, and excessive sweating during menopause.
- **How it works:** Sage contains compounds that may help regulate sweating and improve overall hormonal balance.
- **Precautions:** It is generally considered safe, but large doses can cause gastrointestinal discomfort or interact with certain medications, so it should be used in moderation.



## 8. Ashwagandha

- **Uses:** Ashwagandha is an adaptogen that can help with stress, anxiety, and mood swings, which are common during menopause.
- **How it works:** It helps balance cortisol (the stress hormone) and supports the adrenal glands, which are involved in hormone production during menopause.
- **Precautions:** Ashwagandha may cause digestive upset in some people and should be used cautiously by those with thyroid issues or autoimmune conditions.

## 9. Maca Root

- **Uses:** Maca is used to support energy levels, reduce fatigue, and balance hormones, particularly during menopause.
- **How it works:** It is thought to help balance estrogen and progesterone levels, thereby reducing symptoms like hot flashes, mood swings, and low libido.
- **Precautions:** Maca is generally considered safe, but it may interact with certain hormone treatments. It's best to consult with a healthcare provider if you are taking medications for hormone-sensitive conditions.

## 10. St. John's Wort

- **Uses:** St. John's Wort is commonly used to manage mood swings, depression, and anxiety associated with menopause.
- **How it works:** It's believed to work by boosting serotonin levels in the brain, which can help improve mood and reduce irritability.
- **Precautions:** St. John's Wort can interact with various medications, including antidepressants, birth control pills, and blood thinners. Always consult with a healthcare provider before using it.

## 11. Lemon Balm

- **Uses:** Lemon balm is often used to relieve anxiety, insomnia, and mood swings during menopause.
- **How it works:** It has calming properties that can help promote relaxation and improve sleep quality. Lemon balm may also help reduce stress and alleviate some of the emotional symptoms associated with menopause.
- **Precautions:** Lemon balm is generally safe but can cause mild side effects like dizziness or nausea in some individuals.



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## **Things to Keep in Mind:**

- **Consult with a healthcare provider:** Before starting any herbal remedy, it's important to consult with a doctor, especially if you have pre-existing health conditions or are taking medications.
- **Monitor for side effects:** While many herbs are considered safe, they can still cause side effects or interact with medications. It's important to start with a small dose and observe your body's response.
- **Consistency:** Herbal remedies typically require consistent use over time to show noticeable effects, so it's important to be patient and give them a fair chance to work.

Herbal remedies can be a helpful addition to your menopause management plan, but they should be considered as part of an overall strategy that includes a balanced diet, exercise, stress management, and possibly other medical treatments.